DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 041 665 32r RC 004 494

TITLE Mexican American Cultural Differences. A Brief Survey to Enhance Teacher Pupil Understanding.
INSTITUTION Moses Lake Intermediate School District 104, Wash. Migrant Education Center.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE [69]
NOTE 7p.

EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$0.45
DESCRIPTORS Anglo Americans, Child Rearing, *Cross Cultural Studies, Educational Attitudes, *Family Relationship, *Mexican Americans, Nationalism, Parent Role, *Social Attitudes, *Spanish, Values

ABSTRACT

Listing some of the Chicano values which differ from those of the Anglo and suggesting possible classroom behavioral implications, this pamphlet provides a teacher with a reference that may help in difficult classroom situations. Values discussed are related to social attitudes, class, family, siblings, competition, role of father, role of mother, body attitudes, childhood, nationalism, language, home environment, and educational attitudes. In conclusion, classroom expressions are presented in English and Spanish with Spanish pronunciations. (AN)

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Mexican American

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

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A BRIEF SURVEY TO ENHANCE
TEACHER PUPIL UNDERSTANDING

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ED 041665
RC 004 494

[1969]

Published with funding from Title I ESEA Public Law 89-750 by the Migrant Education Center, Intermediate School District 104, Bldg. 1310, 25th and Bolling, Moses Lake, Washington 98837

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A SUMMARY OF CONFLICTING VALUES

The Mexican-American child typically lives in a large family, maintains close relationships with his brothers and sisters, and usually speaks a regional Spanish and substandard English. What implications do these and other cultural characteristics have for the behavior of the Mexican-American child in the Anglo classroom?

This pamphlet lists some of the Chicano values that differ from those of the Anglo and suggests possible classroom behavioral implications.

Information for this booklet was taken from a study done by Evelyn Bauer called "The Relationship of Cultural Conflict to the School Adjustment of the Mexican-American Child", 1967, and from observations made by Nina Pruneda, coordinator of migrant programs for Intermediate School District No. 104.

The information compiled here is an Anglo's analysis of the Mexican-American situation and therefore will not necessarily correspond with the Chicano's view of his own circumstance. The comments on home environment, for example, describe the lower class Chicano

home as "noisy", a word that to the Anglo mind is synonymous with chaotic. The Mexican-American, on the other hand, might view the orderliness of the Anglo home as sterile and lifeless. The attempt here is not to make general statements about which situation is better, but to briefly demonstrate cultural differences that may lead to difficulties for the Chicano child in the Anglo classroom.

SOCIAL ATTITUDES

The Anglo's informal, to-the-point frankness in dealing with people differs from the very courteous and formal style of the Mexican-American. The Chicano, for example, typically engages in small talk before business-like discussions.

The business-like, informal discussion between teacher and parent about a child's problem may easily offend the Mexican-American and can cause the Mexican-American to avoid visiting the school and create a negative attitude toward it.

CLASS

The Anglo concept that success depends on effort and that one's present social and economic level need not be accepted is not typically shared by the Mexican-American family. The Chicano instead tends to accept the position in life to which he is born, seeing it not as a matter of personal choice but as a predetermined circumstance.

Those Mexican-Americans who are resigned to accepting their present social and economic level will lack the drive the Anglo culture so depends on, and, lacking that drive, the Chicano child may tend to feel defeated in his associations with intensely motivated Anglo peers.

FAMILY

Large Chicano families, which often include grandparents and other relatives under the same roof, are held in close unity by a strong emphasis on loyality of its members. The Anglo family, in contrast, does not typically include relatives and tends to emphasize the equality and independence of its members.

In the Anglo school, the Chicano's gregariousness and preference for working with peers is often interpreted as cheating.

SIBLINGS

Close relationships are formed between brothers and sisters in the Mexican-American family where older children are often given the responsibility for taking care of the younger ones. The oldest son is frequently a father substitute. While the relationship between siblings in the Anglo family may also be close, parental authority is usually not relegated to older children.

The Chicano child generally works better in groups and accepts the authority of older children.

COMPETITION

Unlike the Anglo child, the Mexican-American will tend to look down on overt competition because of his fear of arousing the envy and destructiveness of peers.

The Mexican-American child will often be unwilling to involve himself in competitive classroom activities.

ROLE OF FATHER

A Chicano father will tend to develop a masculine, dominant image to maintain final authority over the family. He commands great respect from the family, and, while he may be affectionate with the very small, he is dignified and formal with older children.

Authority in the Anglo family is shared between mother and father and the show of affection to children of all ages is not considered unmasculine.

Female authority in our schools may be questioned by a Mexican-American, and because the masculine image is important, a young Chicano will find it difficult to walk away from a fight.

ROLE OF MOTHER

The Chicano mother, usually the source of affection and understanding to her children, is submissive to the father's authority and often to that of the older son. This submissiveness and her exclusive concern with household duties contrasts with the Anglo mother who usually shares the authority with the father and who often is very independent. Employment outside the Anglo home is common.

Girls in the Chicano family are expected to be wives and mothers. School curriculum that emphasizes career oriented studies is likely to seem irrelevant to them.

BODY ATTITUDES

Extreme modesty about physical characteristics will make the Chicano child embarrassed in front of school nurses and doctors and in P.E. class or in any situation that calls attention to the body.

CHILDHOOD

Discipline in the Chicano family seems to lean toward two extremes. On one extreme discipline is maintained with fear, physical punishment, and isolation, and on the other extreme the child is virtually undisciplined; he is allowed to do as he wishes since the parents often feel that life will be hard enough when he grows up. In addition, children are encouraged to be independent at an early age. Sex education is delayed until the teens when it is usually learned from peers.

In the middle class Anglo family the children remain in a dependent role for longer periods and discipline is often through reasoning and logic. Sex education in the "enlightened" home is often early.

Discipline by reasoning commonly used in the Anglo school will not be effective for the Chicano child who is held in line at home with threats and isolation, and Mexican-American parents are likely to resent sex education either because they misunderstand the purpose or they feel sex education is not the school's proper role.

NATIONALISM

The Chicano's loyality to his ethnic group can lead to conflict in the Anglo society. Mexican-Americans sometimes feel that they are caught between two cultures; Mexicans consider him a sell out if he leans toward the "American" way of life; Anglos consider him on the outer fringe of society and may exclude him even more if he identifies strongly with the Mexican culture.

LANGUAGE

The Mexican-American child, who will usually speak Spanish and/or substandard English, will have difficulty in learning new material in the unfamiliar language. This lack of understanding makes the classroom confusing and threatening and sometimes leads to a distrust of school personnel.

HOME ENVIRONMENT

The lower class Mexican-American home tends to be noisy and crowded, and, since little talk is directed to children, the environment is essentially nonverbal. This coupled with the lack of parental supervision and guidance breeds aggressive, "acting-out" behavior and inattentiveness. The typical lack of manipulative and educational toys hinder concept development essential for school success. In contrast, the Anglo family is more orderly, non-crowded, and "acting-out" behavior is discouraged. The middle class emphasis on reason and attention to the children helps the Anglo in developing appropriate concepts for learning.

The Chicano child will tend to display more aggressive "acting - out" behavior than the Anglo and will lack concepts necessary for success in school.

ATTITUDES TOWARD EDUCATION AND SCHOOL

School, to the Chicano, is traditionally thought of as useful for learning a skill but is often subordinate to family duties. The Mexican-American parent sees himself as an educator in his home and considers the home learning experience to be more important than school. In addition, he maintains a strict separation between his role as a parent and the role of the school; that is, he considers his child's activities at home to be his business, not the school's. In contrast, school to the Anglo is considered necessary for success in our culture.

Since the school experience is often embarrassing for the Chicano because of the language difficulties and lack of success, there will be a general lack of interest and a high drop-out rate.

USEFUL CLASSROOM EXPRESSIONS
IN
SPANISH

1. Good morning
   Buenos días
   (B'WEH-nos DEE-ahs)

2. Hello, how are you?
   Hola¿qué tal?
   (OH-lah keh-TAHL?)

3. Good-bye; see you later
   Adiós; hasta luego
   (ah-dee-OHS; AHS-tah L'WEH-go)

4. Do you speak English?
   ¿Hablas inglés?
   (AH-blahs eeng-LEHS?)

5. Yes; no; a little
   Sí; no; un poco
   (See; no; oom-POH-coh)

6. Where are you from?
   ¿De dónde eres?
   (deh DOHN-deh EHR-ehs?)

7. How are you?
   ¿Cómo estás?
   (KOH-mo ehs-TAHS?)

8. I'm fine, thank you
   Estoy bien, gracias
   (ehs-toy B'YEHN, GRAH-s'yahs)

9. You're welcome
   De nada
   (deh NAH-dah)

10. What's your name?
¿Cómo te llamas?
(KOH-mo teh YAH-mahs?)

11. What's your father's (mother's) name?
¿Cómo se llama tu padre(Madre)?)
(KOH-mo seh YAH-mah too PAH-dreh/
MAH-dreh?)

12. How old are you?
¿Cuántos años tienes?
(KWAHN-tohs AH-n'yohs T'YEH-nehs?)

13. Do you have any brothers and sisters?
¿Tienes hermanos?
(T'YEH-nehs ehr-MAH-nohs?)

14. How many?
¿Cuántos?
(KWAHN-tohs?)

15. One; two; three; four; five; six;
seven; eight; nine; ten
Uno; dos; tres; cuatro; cinco;
seis; siete; ocho; nueve; diez
(OO-noh; Dohs; trehs; KWAH-troh;
SEENG-koh; SEH-ees; S'YEH-teh;
OH-choh; NWEH-veh; D'yes)

16. Where do you live?
¿Dónde vives?
(DOHN-deh VEE-vehs?)

17. What did you say?; Pardon me?
¿Qué dices?;¿mande?
(Keh DEE-sehs?; MAHN-deh?)

18. I don't understand
No comprendo
(NO cohm-PREHN-doh)

19. Speak slower, please
    Habla más despacio, por favor
    (AH-blah mahs dehs-PAH-s'yoh, pohr fah-VOR)

20. Wait a minute
    Espérate
    (ehs-PEH-rah-teh)

21. Please sit down
    Siéntate, por favor
    (S'YEHN-tah-teh, pohr fah-VOR)

22. Come here
    Ven acá
    (VEHN ah-KAH)

23. Do you understand?
    ¿Comprendes?
    (kohm-PREHN-dehs?)

24. Come with me.
    Ven conmigo
    (VEHN cohn-MEE-goh)

25. How do you say _____ in Spanish?
    ¿Cómo se dice _____ en español?
    (KOH-moh seh DEE-seh _____ ehn ehspah-N'YOHL?)

26. What does _____ mean?
    ¿Qué quiere decir _____?
    (KEH K'YEH-reh deh-SEER _____?)

27. What's the matter?
    ¿Qué pasa?
    (Keh PAH-sah?)

28. What are you doing?
¿Qué haces?
(Keh AH-sehs?)

29. Do you need help?
¿Necesitas ayuda?
(Neh-seh-SEE-tahs ah-YOO-dah?)

30. Where is _____?
¿Dónde está _____?
(DOHN-deh ehs-TAH_____?)

31. I don't know
No se
(No SEH)

32. Look
Mira
(MEE-rah)

33. Listen
Eschucha
(Ehs-KOO-chah)

34. Be quiet
Silencio
(See-LEHN-s'yoh)

35. Pay attention
Presta atención
(PREHS-tah ah-tehn-S'YOHN)

36. Don't run
No corras
(no COH-rrahs)

37. Return to your seat
Vuelve a tu asiento
(VWEHL-veh ah too ah-S'YEHN-toh)

38. Careful; look out
    Cuidado
    (kwee-DAH-doh)

39. Tell me
    Díme
    (DEE-meh)

40. Show me
    Muéstrame
    (MWEHS-trah-meh)

41. Repeat
    Repite
    (Reh-PEE-teh)

42. Go to the blackboard
    Véte al pizarrón
    (VEH-teh ahl pee-sah-RROHN)

43. Very good!
    ¡Muy bien!
    (mwe B'YEHN!)

44. That's all
    Es todo
    (ehs TOH-doh)

45. Do you have a question?
    ¿Tienes una pregunta?
    (T'YEH-nehs oo-nah preh-GOON-tah?)

46. Who is your teacher?
    ¿Quién es tu maestra?
    (K'YEHN es too mah-EHS-trah?)

47. We will go to the bathroom
    Vamos al baño
    (VAH-mohs ahl BAH-n'yoh)

48. We will go to lunch
Vamos a comer
(VAH_mohs ah coh-MEHR)

49. Now we are going to play
Ahora vamos a jugar
(Ah-OH-rah VAH-mohs ah hoo-GAHR)

50. Would you like to help me?
¿Quieres ayudarme?
(K'YEH-rehs ah-yoo-DAHR-meh?)

51. Open the door
Abre la puerta
(AH-breh lah P'WEHR-tah)

52. Sing with me (plural)
Canten conmigo
(KAHN-tehn cohn-MEE-goh)

53. It's time to go home
Es hora de salir
(Ehs OH-rah deh sah-LEER)

54. Excuse me
Con permiso
(Cohm pehr-MEE-soh)